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The Devouring Mother Archetype

Roy D Blendell Follow 9 min read · Jan 25, 2025

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Influences in Politics and Culture

The goddess Hecate (Image created by Copilot)

I am fortunate to live near two remarkable museums in central England that bring the Victorian era vividly to life. Visiting them feels like stepping back in time to the late 19th and early 20th centuries to the dawn of the modern age. These museums recreate the sights, sounds, and textures of everyday life around 1900, offering a fascinating glimpse into how people navigated the challenges of the industrial revolution.

What strikes me most during these visits is the sheer grit and determination required to merely live in such demanding times. The industrial revolution was an era of ground-breaking technological

advancements, yet it came at a human cost. The forges, the shipyards, the quarries, the mines, were all gruelling places to work, and so it is little wonder that most women opted to stay home, managing households and raising children, rather than suffer the harsh conditions of industrial life.

Much has been written about the remarkable strides women have made in breaking free from monotonous, low-grade jobs — a transformation that has reshaped society and redefined gender roles. This hard-earned liberation is the result of relentless advocacy by women's movements, which shattered barriers and unlocked opportunities that previous generations of women could scarcely imagine. However, two pivotal developments made this revolution possible: the advent of reliable birth control and the rise of transformative technologies.

The introduction of dependable birth control was a watershed moment, giving women autonomy over their reproductive choices and, by extension, their futures. For the first time in history, women could plan their lives with greater precision, pursuing education, careers, and personal ambitions without being constrained by unplanned pregnancies.

At the same time, technological advancements revolutionized the workplace, making it more accessible to women. The automation of physically

demanding jobs, the rise of service-oriented industries, and innovations like the typewriter and computer opened doors to roles that didn't rely on sheer physical strength. These shifts allowed women to participate in the workforce in unprecedented ways, demonstrating their capabilities across diverse fields.

Together, these developments not only empowered women but also laid the foundation for a more equitable and dynamic society — one in which women's contributions are celebrated, and their potential is continually expanding.

Like all movements and cultural shifts, even the most noble causes can be hijacked and distorted by extremists, steering them away from their virtuous origins. The feminist movement is a striking example of this unfortunate phenomenon. What began as a fight for equality, opportunity, and empowerment has, in many instances, devolved into something far removed from its authentic and noble foundations. Modern feminism, as it is often presented today, carries a darker, more toxic undertone — one marked by discord, antagonism, and a growing sense of division rather than unity.

This shift is not entirely unexpected. When any ideology or movement gains widespread acceptance, it inevitably seeps into the collective

unconscious. There, it encounters the shadow aspects of human nature — those unacknowledged fears, biases, and resentments lurking beneath the surface. As a result, the original ideals of the movement become entangled with these shadow elements, distorting its purpose and expression. In this transformation, the positive mother archetype is twisted and diminished, losing its nurturing essence. Eve, the life-giving matriarch of humanity, is reimagined as Kali, a fierce and destructive force. Mary, the compassionate and pure symbol of divine motherhood, is overshadowed by Lilith, the rebellious and vengeful outcast. Similarly, Demeter, the gentle goddess of harvest and motherhood, is reduced to Hecate, a dark and mysterious figure associated with witchcraft and the underworld. These shifts reveal how the archetype of the mother can be distorted, reflecting the shadow side of maternal energy and the collective psyche's struggle to reconcile light and dark.

The Devouring Mother in Politics

In the realm of depth psychology, the devouring mother archetype represents a shadow aspect of maternal care — one that smothers, controls, and ultimately inhibits growth under the guise of protection and love. This archetype, once confined to familial dynamics, has crept into the collective psyche and taken root particularly in left-wing

politics, particularly within certain strains of modern feminism. What began as a movement for equality and empowerment has, in some corners, morphed into a distorted form of maternalism that infantilizes, divides, and suppresses.

Left-wing politics often emphasize compassion, inclusivity, and care for marginalized groups. These values, rooted in the nurturing aspect of the maternal archetype, are essential for societal progress. However, when the shadow side of this archetype takes over, it manifests as overreach, control, and a denial of individual agency.

Policies and rhetoric shaped by the devouring mother archetype often cast individuals as helpless victims, constantly in need of protection from any perceived harm. While genuine systemic issues undeniably exist, this approach risks stripping people of their autonomy and resilience. Instead of fostering empowerment, it cultivates dependency, eroding the very strength and self-reliance needed for personal and societal growth.

The devouring mother archetype thrives on control, and in modern left-wing politics, this often manifests through rigid ideological purity tests, cancel culture, and the suppression of dissenting voices. Cloaked in the language of compassion, it enforces conformity and discourages intellectual

diversity, creating an environment where questioning the narrative triggers outrage and dissenting opinion becomes taboo.

At its core, the devouring mother fears losing her grip. Politically, this translates into policies and cultural attitudes that resist the natural evolution of individuals and communities toward independence. By perpetuating cycles of victimhood and dependency, it stifles the creation of solutions that could genuinely empower people to overcome challenges, grow, and achieve self-determination. These dynamics highlights the danger of compassion twisted into control — where nurturing turns to smothering, and protection becomes oppression.

The Transformation of Feminism

Feminism, once a powerful force for gender equality and individual empowerment, has not been immune to the influence of the devouring mother archetype. In its toxic variant, feminism no longer seeks balance but instead embodies the shadow maternal qualities of domination, suppression, and fear, portraying women as perpetual victims of patriarchal oppression, reducing the rich tapestry of their agency, strength, and resilience to a one-dimensional narrative. While it's true that structural inequalities persist, this framing overlooks women's

capacity to overcome challenges and shape their destinies. It discourages personal responsibility and shifts the focus from genuine empowerment to reliance on external systems for validation and security.

Much like the devouring mother archetype, which suppresses the masculine principle in her children, toxic feminism frequently demonizes masculinity itself. Assertiveness, independence, and strength — traits traditionally associated with the masculine — are often vilified, leading to a cultural backlash that disenfranchises men and creates imbalance in relationships. Women, in turn, may find themselves struggling to relate harmoniously to their own inner dynamics and to men, fostering tension rather than collaboration.

The devouring mother archetype also thrives on division, sowing dependency by pitting one group against another. In the same way, it amplifies adversarial narratives between genders, promoting conflict over understanding. It often replaces the pursuit of equality with a quest for retribution, perpetuating cycles of blame and resentment that leave both sides disempowered.

This archetype's controlling tendencies are also reflected in excessive policing of language, behaviour, and cultural norms. While these efforts

may stem from a desire to create safer, more inclusive spaces, they often come at the expense of open dialogue and personal freedom. By stifling debate and silencing dissent, toxic feminism mirrors the devouring mother's grip, fostering dependency and division instead of nurturing mutual respect and growth.

To break free from this pattern, a healthier feminism must emerge — one that celebrates both feminine and masculine qualities, fosters collaboration, and empowers individuals to find strength within themselves while working toward true equality and harmony.

How Marxism Hijacked Feminism

Modern Marxism has evolved far beyond its original focus on class struggle and the redistribution of wealth, adopting traits that closely resemble the devouring mother archetype. Faced with the failure of its classical socioeconomic model, Marxism has rebranded itself as a champion for marginalized groups, particularly women and minorities. This shift from economic revolution to cultural and ideological warfare marks a significant transformation in its mission and methods.

Where classical Marxism sought to dismantle economic hierarchies, modern iterations aim to

dominate cultural narratives, often through rigid ideological frameworks. Like the devouring mother, this new form of Marxism thrives on control, division, and dependency. It fosters an “us versus them” mentality, encouraging individuals to see themselves as perpetual victims in need of external intervention. This approach suppresses autonomy and resilience, replacing personal empowerment with reliance on ideological systems for identity and validation.

Moreover, just as the devouring mother archetype infantilizes her children to maintain control, modern Marxism tends to reduce individuals to their group identities, undermining their individuality and agency. By emphasizing collective victimhood over personal growth, it discourages self-reliance and reinforces a cycle of dependence on the ideological structure for meaning and purpose.

In this way, Marxism’s modern incarnation has shifted from addressing material inequality to enforcing cultural conformity. Its tools are no longer just economic policies but also language policing, ideological purity tests, and the silencing of dissent. While these tactics are often presented as compassionate efforts to create a more equitable society, they ultimately mirror the devouring mother’s darker traits: overreach, manipulation,

and an unyielding need for control.

To foster true progress, it's essential to recognize and address these tendencies, promoting a balance that empowers individuals without resorting to the divisive and controlling tactics of this archetypal shadow.

Historical and Cultural Examples

The Soviet government cast itself as the ultimate "mother," a provider of all material needs in exchange for unwavering loyalty. However, this overbearing control fostered a culture of dependency that stifled innovation, crushed individuality, and ultimately led to economic stagnation and widespread disillusionment. The promise of care and security came at the cost of freedom and self-determination, illustrating the shadow side of the devouring mother archetype in governance.

A similar dynamic is seen in the rise of cultural Marxism within universities, where the devouring mother archetype manifests in controlling discourse, enforcing ideological conformity, and promoting a sense of helplessness. Critical theory, for instance, often frames societal challenges in terms of systemic oppression, side-lining the importance of individual agency and resilience.

This focus can leave students feeling disempowered, viewing themselves as victims of a system rather than as capable agents of change.

Movements that purport to champion equality frequently risk perpetuating division and dependency rather than fostering genuine empowerment. Narratives centred on oppression and victimhood in racial or gender activism, for example, often discourage individuals from seeking strength and growth through their own efforts. Instead, they promote reliance on external systems or authorities to provide solutions.

By focusing too heavily on systemic barriers and victimhood, these movements unintentionally mirror the devouring mother's need to control and protect. While addressing injustices is vital, true empowerment comes from balancing the fight for equity with the cultivation of personal agency, resilience, and self-reliance. Without this balance, the well-intentioned struggle for progress risks becoming a cycle of dependency and division.

Breaking the Chains of Ideological Overreach

The devouring mother archetype offers a powerful psychological framework for understanding how modern Marxism has evolved from its original focus on socioeconomic equality to a cultural and

ideological force. Instead of addressing material inequities, it now fosters dependency, divides society, and suppresses individuality, echoing the stifling and controlling qualities of the shadow maternal figure. This shift mirrors the archetype's tendency to overprotect and infantilize, preventing true growth and autonomy. Recognizing this dynamic is essential if we are to break free from these limiting patterns and reclaim a vision of progress that is rooted in empowerment, unity, and self-reliance.

At a deeper level, the adoption of Marxism and the devouring mother archetype points to a larger struggle within the collective psyche. It reflects an imbalance and the projection of shadow elements, highlighting the challenge of integrating spiritual principles into the material world. The focus on cultural domination and division reveals a disconnection from higher wisdom, as these patterns emerge in response to unresolved fears and insecurities.

To transcend these distortions, we must recognize and address these archetypal forces, aligning with higher principles that honour both individual autonomy and collective harmony. Only by integrating this wisdom can we achieve true cultural growth, unity, and enlightenment, moving beyond the limitations imposed by the shadow

aspects of the devouring mother and the ideological rigidity of cultural Marxism.

Politics Culture Feminism

Written by Roy D Blendell

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